

Houston/Galveston SIP Announcement  
Remarks Prepared for  
Gregg A. Cooke  
Regional Administrator

Thank you Mayor Brown. Among all the Mayors I have seen, your understanding of the importance of clean air - not only for public health of this region, but the economic health of this community has been invaluable. Thank you, Congressman Delay and Congressman Bentsen for joining us here today. Your personal commitment and interest in our progress has been essential to our success. I know everyone recognizes your commitment and willingness to call on EPA Administrator Whitman and myself to assure Houston's air is cleaner and economic prosperity continues in the area. Also, thank you, Governor Perry for your leadership and commitment to clean air throughout Texas.

Today marks an important day for all of us who have worked hard to bring about cleaner air for Houston, Galveston and the surrounding area. As the nation celebrates the 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the national 1970 Clean Air Act - the country has seen incredible accomplishments across the nation towards improving air quality for community after community. But as

we all know - our job is not done here in Texas.

There is no question that on bad air quality days in Houston, Galveston and the surrounding communities, there are times of the day when school children, and our parents and grandparents simply shouldn't be outside because of high levels of air pollution.

Through the leadership of Governor Rick Perry, the Clean Air Plan has been improved and revised - bringing about additional pollution control measures which have only been recently added. I believe this innovative Clean Air Plan to be one of the most technically advanced clean air plan ever devised.

I have no doubt that this plan will provide an aggressive framework that will make great strides in protecting public health in this community. As a result, I am approving the Houston/Galveston State Implementation Plan for clean air.

Any plan will only be successful, however, if all of the parties remain committed over time to implement the measures contained in it – clean air will not result because of the approval of this plan today – today's action

marks only the first step toward the goal of providing clean air for Houston and surrounding communities by 2007.

To meet our ultimate goal of clean air - the coalition of local and state leaders, Mayor Lee Brown and our partners here with us today, must remain committed.

Your success including the passage of SB5, which was signed into law by you, Governor Rick Perry, - the first time in history that EPA has given credit for an economic incentive package instead of relying on additional rules requiring compliance - is an outstanding example of how partnerships can, and do work. Senate Bill 5 is sure to become a national model for incorporating economic incentives into clean air planning.

To achieve the Plan's goal, every sector of the community must do their part or this plan will not succeed in cleaning the air in the Houston and Galveston areas.

The industrial community must continue to work in refining its proposals to reduce Nitrogen Oxides reductions contained in the plan - and in developing enforceable and verifiable pollution control measures

for reductions of Volatile Organic Compounds. The TNRCC and EPA will work with industry to refine the Plan once any proposed changes demonstrate they will improve public health.

The Houston-Galveston Area Council must continue to show leadership to ensure the transportation needs of Houston are met without making air pollution and urban sprawl worse. Along with citizen groups such as GHASP, they must insure that the voluntary measures contained in the SIP are implemented.

The airline, railroad and tug boat industries must remain committed to implementing the unique voluntary agreements that will greatly reduce the amount of contaminants in the air.

The Texas legislature must continue to show their leadership by supporting TNRCC as it develops new and innovative measures and remain committed to ensure that SB5 is properly implemented and funded.

The TNRCC will continue to face many challenges in implementation of this Plan. I am sure that the leadership of TNRCC will remain

committed to the partnership with local leaders and the EPA to ensure that the various mile-posts toward Clean Air Act compliance are achieved.

The news media must continue to highlight the success of innovations that reduce air pollution and assure that this struggle does not retreat into the background of public consciousness.

Our job for achieving clean air is not done here in Texas. In order for this Plan to result in cleaner air, everyone - each of us - must remain committed to implementing every aspect of this Plan so that one day there will be no more “red level” ozone alerts when our children cannot play outside.

Governor Perry, I have the distinct honor on behalf of President George Bush and EPA Administrator Christie Whitman to present to you this Environmental Excellence Award for your outstanding commitment for improving air quality in Houston by signing in law Senate Bill 5.

Thank you and congratulations.